COMMONWEALTH DAY MESSAGE

SPEAKER.—I have received a message from the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commenwealth Parliamentary Association. Headquarters Secretariat, London, which is as follows :

March 8th was observed as Commonwealth Day in all countries which are members of this unique family of nations. This is the eight consecutive year making its observance. I am pleased to continue the custom started by previous Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and send a Commonwealth Day Message to all Branches of the Association,

During the past year, Belize and Antigua and Berbuda achived their independence. The C P A congratulates both countries and looks forward to their continuing interest in the Association.

The C P A. like Commonwealth itself. has undergone a process of evolution. Since its founding in 1911 as the Empire Parliamentary Association, it has grown to meet the changing and varied needs of its members on every continent. The C P A is today as association of Commonwealth Parliamentarians who, irrespective of race, religion or culture, are united by community of interest, respect for the rule of law and individual rights and freedoms. and by pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy.

The community of interest which typifies our Association is based on diversity, In that respect, it reflects the Commonwealth itself. Parliamentary democracy is represented in the C P A and in the Commonowealth by institutions with centuries of tradition. Equally, the C P A embraces parliamentary assemblies which have evolved new and different representational forms to better reflect the dynamic and needs of their particular societies.

The C P A also rests on a foundation of equality. Baranches representing national parliaments and those representing state, provincial or territorial legislatures participate on an equal footing; so do old Branches and new, large ones and small.

Co-operation within the Commonwealth takes many and varied forms : education, health, law, technical assistance; and scientific research, to name a few. The particular and essential contribution of the C PA rates in its pursuit of the positive ideals of parliamentary democracy. It is in its dedication to this pursuit and the concomitant recognition of the principles of accountability, free elections, protection of the rights of individuals and minorities and respect for the rule of law, that the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will continue to make its unique contribution to its 10,000 members, to its 127 branches and to the Commonwealth itself.